

Dear Chair Koman, Chair Barnes, and members of the Committees:

My name is Djamilatou Bah, and I am a renter in Maryland. I am asking you to pass HB1040 to protect the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) for its intended purpose, including at least \$100 million for heat pumps and induction stoves.

I am not exaggerating at all when I tell you that my utility bills are out of control nowadays and I can guarantee you that many Marylanders feel that way. My bill from December 2025 to January 2026 was \$627. Before that, my utility bill was \$558.

And now because I was late paying both bills, PEPCO decided to add a \$470 deposit on top of my bill which is almost \$400. Why? When did utility companies become predatory?

These bills are a constant source of stress for me and my family. I live in a townhome with 1500 square feet, not a mansion, not a luxury home, but an ordinary place where a family is trying to build a life.

I work a full time job in healthcare and work from 9am to 11pm caring for others every single day. When I'm not working, I am organizing soccer games for kids, serving on the Board of Directors of the Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative, and helping tenants to stand up for their rights and clean energy with the Maryland Just Power Alliance.

My husband wakes up at 4:30am to get to work. Our son is at school from 7:00am to 6:15pm. Like so many Marylanders, we are doing everything right, working hard, giving back, and trying to move forward.

So let me tell you why using the Strategic Energy Investment Fund towards its original purpose is fundamental. Funding long term solutions like replacing my electric resistance heater with heat pumps could save me nearly \$1500 per year, and could make a difference for Maryland families like mine. Because what we need is not a temporary fix.

I know that our well-intentioned Governor and legislators may want to take the short-cut and give out two \$40 rebates as they did last year which will go right back to the companies, but where I come from, we have a saying that you don't fix a big leak by covering it with a towel. A small rebate may help for a moment but it does not solve the problem at all.

Two weeks ago, I learned that PEPCO, Baltimore and Gas Electric are part of the parent company Exelon whose profits were \$578 million. To add insult to injury, families like mine are asking to shoulder the increasing cost while these companies continue to thrive.

How can our great state of Maryland allow this to continue when working families like mine have to struggle and lose sleep over making decisions like keeping lights on or having food on the table? It is inadmissible.

I encourage the Environment & Transportation Committee and the Appropriations Committee to choose the wise path and invest in the longer term and more equitable solution. Use the Strategic Energy Investment Fund as it was originally intended. Pass HB1040.

Help families like mine not just to survive but finally breathe and thrive.

So no one is left behind- as so many are feeling in this moment in the state of Maryland.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Djamilatou Bah